Permanent Mission of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations
666 THIRD AVENUE
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10017

TL3179
CIDAC 00244
Centro de Documentação
-5. ABR. 1995

RELIGIOUS LIFE IN EAST TIMOR

RELIGIOUS LIFE IN EAST TIMOR

INTRODUCTION

Religious freedom in Indonesia including East Timor is guaranteed by the Constitution in Article 29, section 1, which states: "The state shall be based on the belief in God Almighty". The national philosophy Pancasila has theism as its primary tenet. Hence all citizens are guaranteed the freedom to profess and to practice their respective religions.

Indonesia is one of the few countries to have a Department of Religious Affairs, whose task is not only to promote religious life in Indonesia but to ensure harmonious tolerance between all of the different religions. This is of even greater significance in that Indonesia has a predominantly Moslem population. All religions are accorded equal recognition and the primary function of the Department of Religious Affairs is to protect and assure the rights of all faiths.

Official holidays include Muslim, Christian, Hindu and Buddhist Holy days. Indonesian Muslims, Christians and Buddhists maintain active links with co-religionists outside Indonesia and freely exercise their right to travel to religious gatherings throughout the world.

During the Fourth PELITA (Five Year Plan), the Indonesian Government will make further efforts to enhance religious life in Indonesia by inter alia distributing holy books of different religions, giving assistance to build or rehabilitate 750 places of worship, about 50 marriage halls and marriage councils and to expand a number of religious courts and offices for religious affairs in sub-districts, districts, municipalities and regions.

No primeiro parágrafo, acrescentar o seguinte:

" TOTAL - 476.412

The remaining population, out of a total of 555.350 registered at the 1980's census are of undedetermined religious denomination or assumed to be animists."

RELIGIOUS LIFE IN EAST TIMOR

According to the 1980 national census the overwhelming majority of the East Timorese population are followers of the Catholic faith. Following is a breakdown of the population according to religion as of 1984:

Catholics	:	447.390 persons
Protestants	:	14,589 persons
Moslems	:	14,087 persons
Hindu's	:	318 persons
Buddhists	:	28 persons

Torre - 476.412

(Source : Department of the Interior - 1984)

As in other regions of Indonesia and as already stated above, the people of East Timor enjoy complete freedom to profess and to practice their respective religions, c.q. the Catholic faith, both in privacy and in public places of worship. In many regions of Indonesia, including East Timor, such religious practice fully takes local traditional customs into account and this again is a manifestation of the religious tolerance that exists in Indonesia.

The status of the Catholic Church in East Timor during the Portuguese administration was fully subservient to the Catholic Church of Portugal. According to a treaty concluded in 1950 between Portugal and the Vatican the diocese in East Timor was directly under the control of the Catholic Church of Portugal.

Today, there is a direct relationship between the Catholic Church in East Timor and the Vatican through the apostolic Nuncio in Jakarta. The diocese in Dili is headed by a Bishop who is appointed by the Pope. The apostolic administrator of East Timor is Monsignor Bello as the position of Bishop is vacant. It will remain so

until the Vatican takes a decision on whether or not the Church in East Timor should integrate with the Indonesian Roman Catholic Church.

Monsignor Bello has full freedom to conduct all religious activities. For example, between August 1984 and February 1985 the Monsignor celebrated Mass and performed the sacrament of confirmation at parishes in many regions of East Timor including Los Palos, Baucau, Viqueque, Aileu, Maliana, Suai, Liquisa and Atauro, without any restrictions or hindrance.

Each religious ceremony was usually followed by a feast attended by all residents of the village, Government officials and village Chiefs.

The Indonesian Government has also promoted cooperation between the Apostolic Administrator in Dili and the Bishops' Conference of Indonesia. In recent statements to the press, the Chairman and the Secretary-General of the Bishops' Conference of Indonesia have expressed their appreciation for such cooperation and for the way in which the Indonesian Government has facilitated assistance by the Bishops' Conference to the people of East Timor in the fields of education, vocational training and health services.

The Dili Diocese is divided into 21 parochial districts. Each parochial district is sub-divided into two or three sub districts (Stasi). Each district and stasi is led by a pastor. In total there are 98 Catholic and Protestant churches in East Timor. Mass is given in the Tetun, Porto and Indonesian languages. There are 35 Catholic pastors in East Timor, consisting of: 16 indigenous East Timorese, 10 foreigners (Spanish, Portuguese, Filipino etc.) and 9 hailing from other regions of Indonesia. At the moment, 9 indigenous priests are studying at the High Seminary in Flores and 16 more are studying abroad. In addition, all foreign missionaries who were in East Timor during the period of integration are today engaged in their missionary work, while those who arrived after integration have been admitted according to immigration

regulations that apply to all provinces of Indonesia.

The Catholic Church runs many social welfare projects in East Timor, including schools. There are over 20,000 children in Catholic primary schools and 3,000 in secondary schools. Presently there are 101 religious teachers who have been appointed in East Timor and 171 who will be appointed in the near future.

All Catholic schools have full freedom in formulating their curriculum which includes:

(a) Catechism is accorded priority and is taught in every Catholic School from kindergarten to senior highschool by specially trained teachers who have at their disposal all necessary facilities to conduct the courses;

(b) Each school day begins and ends in prayer;

(c) Regular Mass and other religious rites are conducted in every school;

(d) Recollection (religious contemplation) is conducted in unison at the end of every semester/academic year;

(e) All Catholic Holy days are observed in schools or churches with a priest or school staff member as the celebrant;

(f) Students and faculty participate fully in church activities such as joining church choirs, altar boys or teach in the parish.

In performing its humanitarian and social welfare work, the Catholic Church in East Timor has been accorded full opportunity not only to carry on its own programs but also to do so in cooperation with the Indonesian Red Cross, the I.C.R.C., the Indonesian Bishops' Conference, the C.R.S., the St. Theresia Foundation in Jakarta and other functional institutions. In this context, assistance programs have been and are being extended to orphanages, the unemployed, and less fortunate school children and have also covered visits and the extension of religious/spiritual support to

detainees and hospital patients.

Funding for religious purposes is provided through five sources: the Central Government, the Provincial Government, foreign aid through the Department of Religious Affairs, support through MAWI (Bishops' Conference of Indonesia) and contributions from the community. Financial assistance received for East Timor from churches abroad are being channeled through the Bishops' Conference.

On its part the Indonesian Government has since 1976 allocated a special budget for the building and rehabilitation of religious places of worship in East Timor. As an illustration, in the 1976/1977 budget year Rp. 18,200,000.- (approximately US$26,000) was appropriated to build/rehabilitate 15 Catholic Churches, 1 Protestant Church and 1 Mosque. In the 1983/1984 budget year Rp. 65,700,000., (approximately US$65,000.) was appropriated to build/rehabilitate 25 Catholic Churches, 13 Protestant churches 11 mosques and one Hindu Temple.

The Indonesian Government has also initiated and funded a special program in East Timor to promote religious teachings through educational media such as Elementary and Secondary Schools and to grant scholarships for those who wish to further their studies in the Catholic religion in other parts of Indonesia. The Government has allocated funds for allowances to priests and nuns in East Timor with an annual sum of Rp. 8,580,000 (approximately US$12,000) during the fiscal years 1979/80 through 1983/84. In addition, for the academic year 1984/85 a Catholic Teachers Training school was opened. Furthermore In December 1984, the Governor of East Timor laid the corner stone for the foundation of a Catholic church which was attended by Mgr. Bello to give his blessings. Significantly the plan to build a Cathedral in Dilli has been approved by Mgr. Bello and the Governor of East Timor. The design for the Cathedral has been completed and the construction will be funded by the Department for Religious Affairs.

The following table reflects the total funds expended (or allocated for fiscal year 1985/86) by the Central and Provincial Governments for religious activities in East Timor:

FISCAL YEAR	REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BUDGET	NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BUDGET	TOTAL
1983/1984	Rp. 95,885,000	Rp. 53,680,000	Rp.149,565,000
	$ 146,669	$ 81,611	$ 228,280
1984/1985	Rp.159,962,540	Rp.125,475,000	Rp.285,437,540
	$ 244,684	$ 190,763	$ 435,448
1985/1986	Rp.222,700,000	Rp.121,475,000	Rp.344,175,000
	$ 340,650	$ 184,682	$ 525,332
1983/1986			Rp.779,167,540
			$1,184,595

Since integration, East Timor has witnessed a considerable increase in the number of baptisms in the Catholic faith. For example the average of 100 to 200 baptisms conducted at parochial districts before integration has increased to an average of 1,000 to 2,000 baptisms after integration.

Hence there are no grounds for the assertion that the scope of the clergy's pastoral role has been limited as compared to the Portuguese period. The fact of the matter is that during that era the tasks of the priests went beyond their religious functions and included considerable temporal civil administrative powers,

which can be attributed to the lack of personnel in the colonial administration. After integration public administration was undertaken by the civil service of the provincial Government, thus allowing the clergy to fully devote themselves to their pastoral duties. This can perhaps explain the impression among some of the clergy that they have undergone a "diminution" of their power and authority over the population. Significantly, the provincial Government in East Timor is predominantly Catholic, notably the Governor, Mr. Carrascalao, as well as a disproportionately high number of Christians in the civil service drawn from East Timor and other parts of Indonesia.

In conclusion, there is complete freedom of religion in East Timor. There are no restrictions placed on the clergy's pastoral duties who have total freedom of movement throughout the province as well as abroad. The Catholic Church has full authority over the parochial school system and has been steadily expanding its educational activities. In addition, the Catholic Church in East Timor participates with other humanitarian organizations in providing assistance to the population. The Provincial and Central Governments have and are continuing to allocate significant resources, financial and others, to facilitate the unfettered development of religious life in the province. Finally, it should be clear from all of the foregoing that the Constitutionally guaranteed right of religious freedom is fully respected in East Timor as it is in all other provinces of Indonesia.